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Bullying Prevention Among Elementary School Children

Yazmin Mendez

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

## Bullying Prevention Among Elementary School Children

### Introduction

Bullying is a problem in schools that often gets overlooked and remains undetected because children tend to not speak up on the subject. When bullying goes unreported, children can turn to inflicting self harm, harming others, withdrawing from activities and schoolwork. In order to address the lack of bullying prevention in elementary schools, I created a three-day workshop for third grade students at Sherwood Elementary School in Salinas, California.

### Needs Statement

Bullying is a public health concern that needs to be addressed in order to provide a safe learning environment for children, that if not addressed affects children's academic success (De Vries, 2018). Bullying is a method both done physically and verbally in order to seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone, usually someone perceived as vulnerable (Aulia, 2016). Usually, bullying begins at the primary level and continues into adulthood (Farah, 2016). In fact, the widespread presence of bullying and victimization in elementary schools may be higher than in older students (Peachey, 2017). According to DeVries, "about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of children are involved in bullying in early elementary school" (2018). Through DeVries's article it is very evident how big of an issue bullying is for elementary school children which is why it needs to be addressed (2018). Children must learn about the long term effects bullying can cause on a person at an early age or these negative traits will only get worse as they grow older. Being that bullying is a public health concern it's important to stop and reduce the amount of bullying from occurring. In order to do that teachers and staff must provide intervention methods to deal with bullying and teach kids how to deal with bullying if they were to see it or experience it. For my project, I will

be conducting a three-day, anti-bullying workshop for 3rd graders in which they will learn more on the topic.

Bullying is not black and white although it may appear that way. When a child is bullied this takes a toll on their academic performance. Bullying can be something as simple as a nickname, even though it's perceived innocent in comparison to getting punched (Farah, 2016). From this we can get a better understanding on how something so simple can turn into bullying which can later affect a child's academic performance. When children are constantly being bullied in school and nothing is being done to alleviate their situation children act out in ways they can (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Children struggling with bullying can begin to have difficulty learning, report poor grades, not want to attend school, etc (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Although, most children don't speak out on bullying, as parents watching for subtle warning signs of bullying can help to alleviate their child's situation.

Additionally, bullying is important to address because if nothing is done there can be serious side effects to children's mental health. In a study I found they said that "victims of bullying may experience a low level of wellbeing, poor adjustment and psychological distress were higher in conditions that can lead to depression and thoughts of suicide" (Farah, 2016). Although, when looking at bullying it can seem like a simple innocent act, it is anything but that because being constantly harassed changes your mindset to the point where you believe what you hear, which feels like the reality. Students who are bullying can begin to feel depression, low self-esteem, health problems, or even suicidal thoughts (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). When children go to school these thoughts should never cross their minds, but they do because for some bullying affects them so much mentally that they would rather look for other alternatives like suicide (Hazelden Foundation, 2016).

What happens when children witness bullying? In a study I found they found that “most children witness bullying on many occasions during their school years” (Rock, 2012). This alone is important to take in mind because when someone sees something done constantly it seems “normal” and you become numb to it, which is what we don’t want bullying to be considered, especially at a young age. Additionally, the same study wanted to test children’s overall knowledge of what they perceived bullying to be by telling them a priming story, four test stories, and one distractor story on bullying (Rock, 2012). The study they asked them to 1. Identify the actions of the bully, 2. Check their understanding of why the bully’s actions were wrong, and 3. Recognized that the bystander had witnessed the event (Rock, 2012). Once the study was concluded it was found that “older children provided more strategies than younger children” (Rock, 2012). Although, older children know how to react to bullying better in comparison to younger children, bullying does not discriminate by age, sex, gender, or ethnicity all children need to know what to do and who to go to should they ever witness bullying or be victims of bullying. Moreover, although a child is not experiencing bullying themselves, being a bystander to bullying can cause them to feel unsafe as well (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Children who are witnesses to bullying can feel fearful, powerless, guilty for not stopping it, or even tempted to participate due to peer pressure (Hazelden Foundation, 2016). Needless to say, being a bystander affects children’s mental well being to an extent by causing worry and a feeling of helplessness which children should not have, much less at school.

Given that bullying is a huge issue in schools that can lead to children not having a safe learning environment in which to learn in, it is important to address this issue. I have created a three-day interactive lesson on bullying for the 3rd graders at Sherwood Elementary School, Salinas, California.

### Theory

Developmentally, children are in Albert Bandura's social learning theory. As a part of this stage, children learn through observation, imitation, and modeling (Kurt, 2020). Since children learn through observation, imitation, and modeling, it is important to give them the tools they need in order to prevent from being bullied. Due to children being so young it is extremely important for them to learn about bullying and its effects at a young age because they typically have little information on the topic unlike adults that may have a biased idea on bullying and what it is. Additionally, according to Bandura's theory, he claims that "observation alone may not be sufficient enough to incur maximal learning; a person's motivation and their mental state also influence learning" (Kurt, 2020). Which essentially means that children learn differently and for various different reasons like some may learn because they want to feel accomplished or to just simply learn. Due to that children need to do four steps in order to learn which are to pay attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Kurt, 2020). Moreover, following Bandura's theory by showing children the correct behaviors and how to react correctly in regards to bullying, can help prevent bullying from occurring or continuing (Kurt, 2020). Additionally, with young children, now that technology is being used more than ever, it is one of the best outlets that allows adults to teach children about the dangers of bullying in a subtle way. This can be shown through parents showing their children educational videos or games that teach them about bullying. Therefore, I am creating a 3-day lesson plan in which I will teach children about bullying and the dangers of what bullying is.

### Consideration of Diversity

My project will be conducted at Sherwood Elementary School in Salinas, California, targeting a group of 3rd graders. According to the Sherwood Elementary School Profile (2020-

21), the student population at Sherwood Elementary School is 100% Hispanic or Latino. In addition the majority of the students in this school are socioeconomically disadvantaged. (Sherwood Elementary School Profile, 2020-21). I believe that the third graders would reflect the ethnic and economic diversity of the school. Additionally, the lessons are going to be conducted in English, so the participants must show proficiency in English. Those who are not English proficient may be excluded from participation. This project is geared towards elementary school students because their understanding of bullying is different from those of young adults and parents who know what bullying is and looks like.

### Learning Outcomes

I intend to provide a three-day lesson to 3rd grade students at Sherwood Elementary School in Salinas, California.

By the end of my project, participants will be able to:

1. Identify one sign of bullying that is obvious and one that is subtle.
2. Identify one way they can stand up for themselves if they are being bullied.
3. Indicate one intervention strategy as a bystander.

### Method

#### Day 1

First I would have started off by introducing myself, and the reason for me being in there. Then, I would have proceeded to ask the children what they felt bullying was and to give me some examples. Shortly after we would have had a brief ten minute discussion, and once it was over I gave them the actual definition of bullying and what a bully looks like and I would have written it down on the board if I had been able to complete my project. Then I would have

proceeded to show them this short video that explains bullying a bit more

<https://youtu.be/4mrE5zgEvt4> . Once we finished the short video I would have asked them to tell their neighbor one sign of bullying and one that was not as obvious in the video. After speaking to their partners for five minutes then I would have asked the children to share with the class. Then I would proceed to pass out a worksheet called “Thinking about Feelings”. See Appendix A. The children would have then been given a chocolate upon completion of the “Thinking about feelings” worksheet. After the children would have been given a worksheet with “nobody deserves to be bullied” in which they could color in the picture and write speech bubbles of positive things to tell the girl in the wheelchair. See Appendix B.

## **Day 2**

On day two, I would have briefly gone over what we had learned about the previous day and had the kids show me their “nobody deserves to be bullied” worksheet from the day before now that it was colored and had speech bubbles. Then I would have had the children show me their finished worksheet in order to get them to engage on the topic as well as a way to see how well they were retaining the information learned. I would have proceeded to show another video regarding bullying [https://youtu.be/EvhIdB\\_8WXE](https://youtu.be/EvhIdB_8WXE). After the video, I asked them why “McGruff” stating “stop, talk and walk” was important to remember when being a bullying target. After a five minute discussion, I would have proceeded to give the children a “What would Pip do” worksheet and instructed them to fill it out with their neighbor. See Appendix C. Then we would have had another brief discussion about the examples they wrote down on their worksheet. Then, I would have given the children a true/false test on what the participants knew about bullying. See Appendix D. After the test, I would have gone over the questions as a class and discussed why they thought certain questions were not examples of bullying for about ten



minutes. At the end, I would have given them a “Kindness Catcher” worksheet in order to end the day with something fun and as a way for them to play with it and continue learning about bullying. See Appendix E.

### **Day 3**

On the third and final day, I would have again gone over briefly what we had learned about the past couple of days. I then would have proceeded to show a video regarding how to be an upstander and avoid being a bystander should they ever witness bullying <https://youtu.be/eeqQCyQOCPg>. After the video I would have asked the students why “NED” was so important and we had a brief discussion for ten minutes. Then I would have proceeded to talk to them about why it's important to speak up, reach out, and be a friend when you see bullying happening. I will ask them to the “Take the pledge” paper in which it stated “I am a kid against bullying! And I will”. See Appendix F. Shortly after, I gave them an “Anti-bullying sticker” and asked them some questions about what they had learned in the last couple of days. Those that participated received a chocolate as a reward for participating in the discussion. After some questions, I would have thanked them for having me and reminded them to not bully others and remember what they had learned.

### **Results**

Not completed due to Covid-19.

### **Discussion**

Not completed due to Covid-19.

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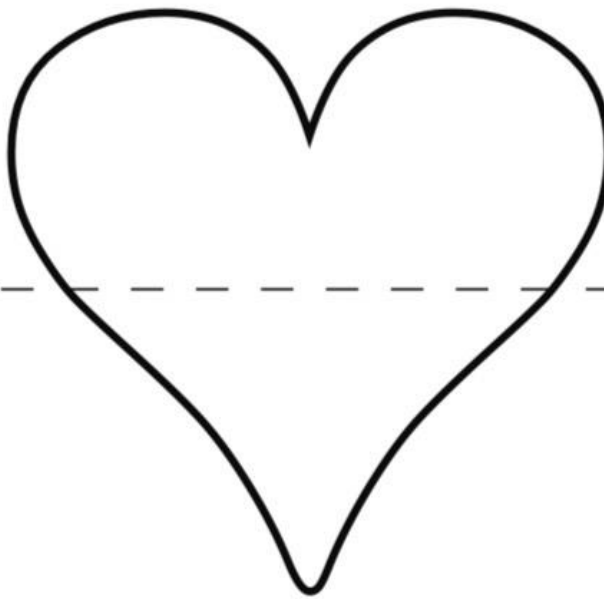
*Appendix A*

## Thinking About Feelings

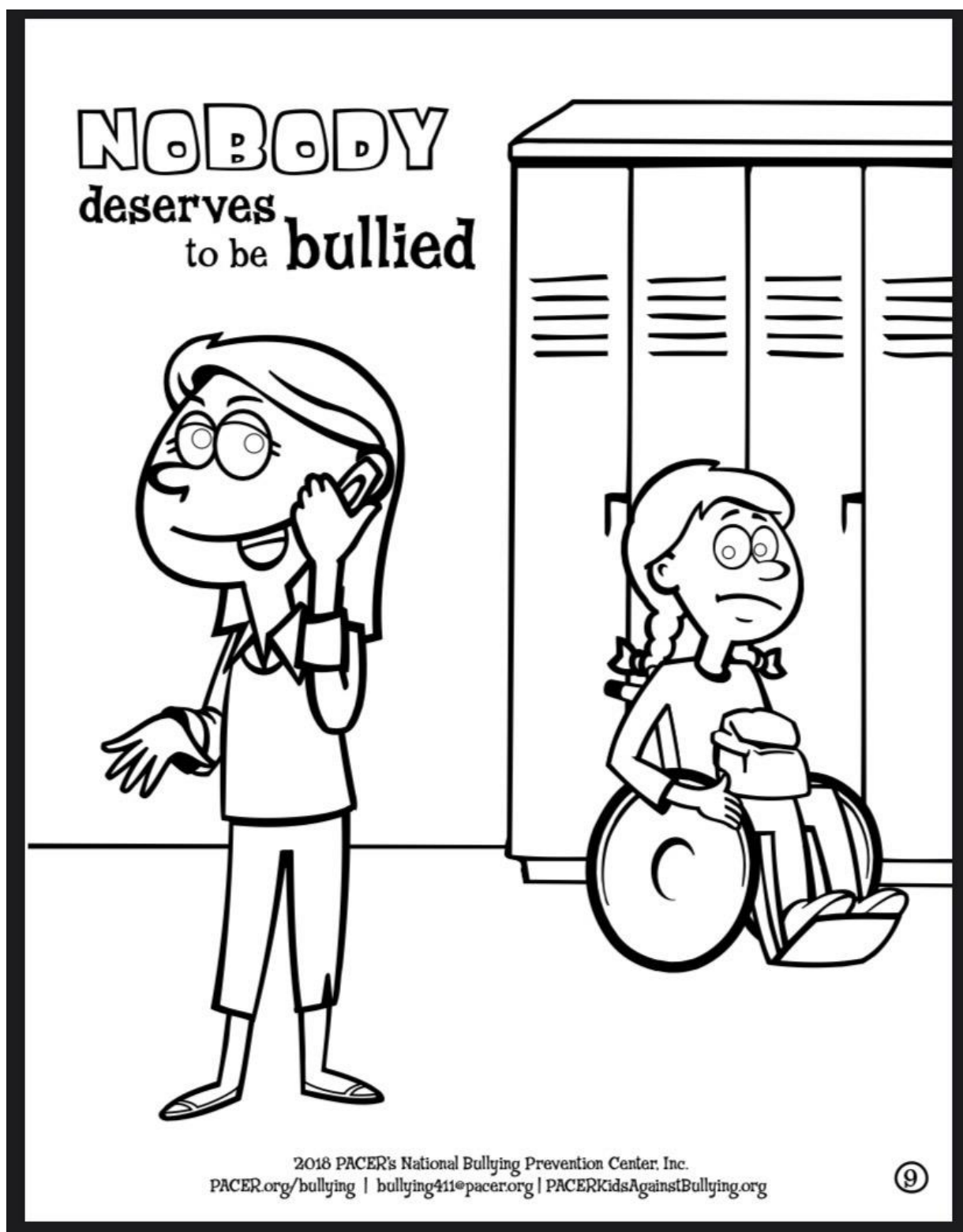
**Our words and actions can leave a lasting mark! Kids who are bullied often feel alone – let them know that someone cares!**

**On the top half of the heart, write positive behaviors that make others feel good. This can include ideas to spread kindness, support someone being bullied, and include others.**

**ON the bottom half of the heart, write negative behaviors that may hurt. This can include bullying behaviors or things that might make bullying worse.**



**Behaviors can have a positive or negative effect on friends, classmates, and others. As a Kid Against Bullying, remember to use above the line, positive behaviors, especially if you see someone experiencing bullying!**

*Appendix B*

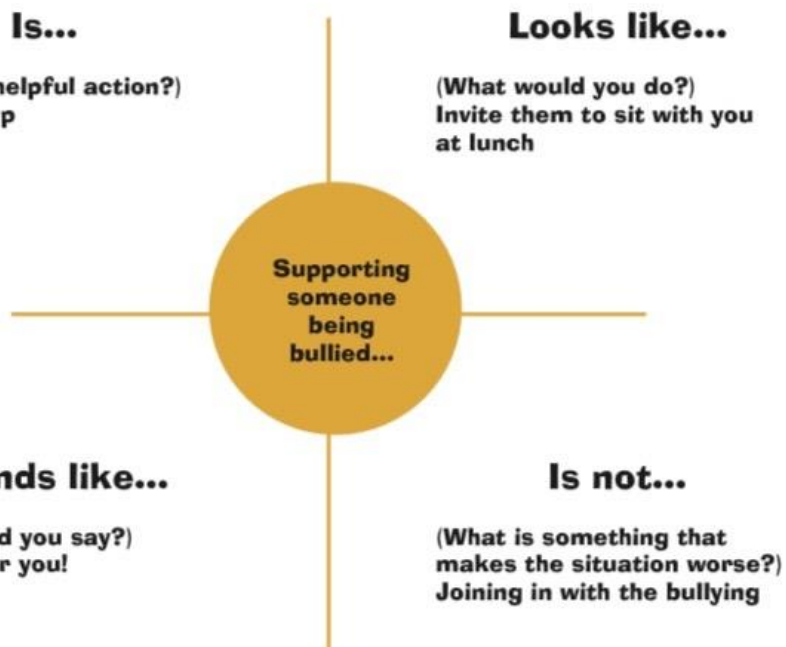
## Appendix C



## What Would Pip Do?

Before joining the Kids Against Bullying Club Crew, Pip lived in a pet shop with about a gazillion other hamsters. He was the littlest one, and was often teased and called names. After experiencing bullying, Pip now speaks up against bullying! He knows it's important to reach out to those being bullied and be a friend.

Imagine you saw a classmate that was being bullied by another student. What could you do to help? Think about what Pip might do or say when answering the questions below. He even shared a few examples to help you get started!

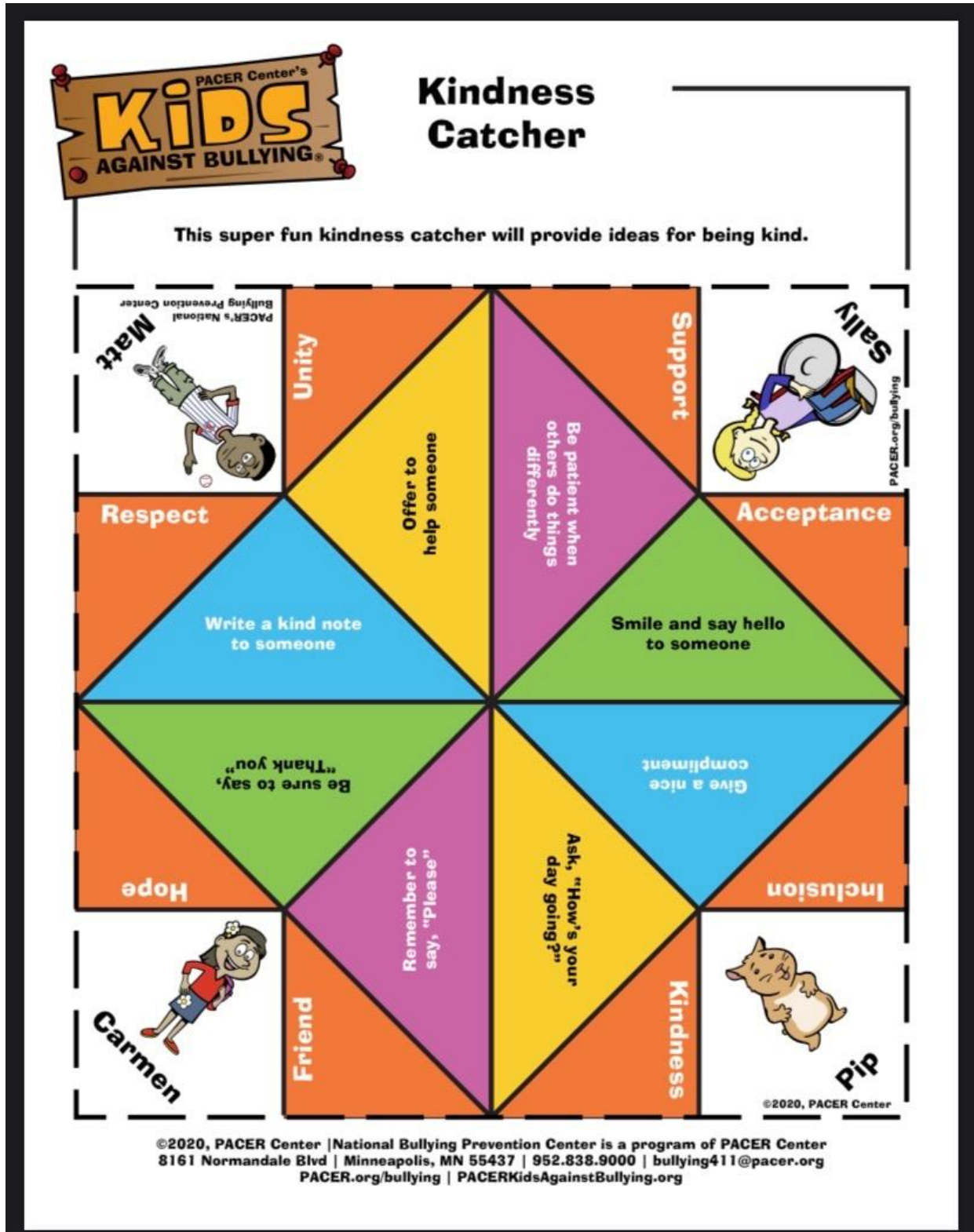


*Appendix D***True/False Test for Learning Outcomes****What do you know about bullying?**

**Please indicate if the following are true or false: (T or F)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Bullying is only when you are being hurt physically.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Only girls bully.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Bullying is done on purpose.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Saying mean things to other people is bullying.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Bullying is only when you are being told mean things.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Telling an adult you are being bullied is the best way to stop bullying.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Only boys bully.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Most people see bullying happening but don't say anything to stop it.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Bullying can happen anywhere not just in school.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ You should always speak up if you are being bullied.

## Appendix E





## Appendix F



## Take the Pledge

**I am a Kid Against Bullying!  
And I will:**

**SPEAK UP**  
when I see bullying

**REACH OUT**  
to others who are bullied

**BE A FRIEND**  
whenever I see bullying



*Appendix G*

## Presentation from Capstone Festival

**Bullying Prevention Among Elementary School Children**  
Yazmin Mendez

**What Is A Bully?**  
A person who habitually seeks to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone whom they perceive as vulnerable

**Need Statement**

- Bullying affects children's academics
- Bullying affects children's mental health
- Being a bystander to bullying

**Theory/ Development**  
Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory

- Bandura believes we learn through observation
- Four components for the modeling process
  - Attention, Retention, Reproduction, Motivation

**What Did You Do? With Whom And Where?**  
Conducted a 3 day lesson plan at Sherwood Elementary School with a group of 3rd grade students

**Day 1**

Worksheet: Bullying Prevention

Worksheet: Bullying Prevention

**Day 2**

**Day 3**

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end participants will be able to...

1. Identify one sign of bullying that is obvious and one that is subtle.
2. Identify one way they can stand up for themselves if they are being bullied.
3. Indicate one intervention strategy as a bystander.

**Results**

Not completed due to Covid 19

**Discussion**

Not completed due to Covid 19

**Questions?**

Thank you!

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